

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /116 W

----- 091707

R 201608Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6005

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DUBLIN 1307

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EI, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: LITTLE MOVEMENT IN IRISH-BRITISH SECURITY TALKS

SUMMARY: FIRST IRISH-BRITISH TALKS ON SECURITY PRODUCED NO MOVEMENT ON PROBLEM OF CROSS-BORDER RAIDS BY PROVO IRA. BRITISH ARE DISAPPOINTED BY IRISH REFUSAL TO ACCEPT COOPERATION BETWEEN MILITARY FORCES. END SUMMARY.

1. BRITISH AND IRISH OFFICIALS HELD FORMAL TALKS ON SECURITY SEPTEMBER 18. MEETING TOOK PLACE AT SITE IN REPUBLIC. FOR IRISH SIDE, MAIN PARTICIPANT WAS JUSTICE MINISTER COONEY; FOR BRITISH, NI SECRETARY MERLYN REES. BOTH BROUGHT ALONG REPRESENTATIVES OF POLICE FORCES, BUT AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE IRISH SIDE, THERE WAS NO MILITARY PARTICIPATION. PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS OF MEETING WERE SPARSE, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT IRISH SIDE WANTED LOW-KEY PRESS COVERAGE.

2. MAIN SUBJECT OF TALKS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE IN BORDER AREA BETWEEN NI AND REPUBLIC. BRITISH HAVE LONG BEEN IRRITATED BY FAILURE OF IRISH FORCES TO COOPERATE IN REPRESSION OF IRA BORDER RAIDS. ON BRITISH SIDE, ARMY HAS MAIN RESPONSIBILITY. IN REPUBLIC, UNARMED POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE, AND ARMY

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PROVIDES ONLY "SUPPORT." NEITHER POLICE NOR ARMY APPEAR TO HAVE

ANY EFFECTIVE MEANS OF COMMUNICATING WITH BRITISH, AND GOI HAS LONG RESISTED BRITISH PRESSURE FOR COORDINATION. IRISH OBVIOUSLY REMAIN RELUCTANT, AS WITNESS REFUSAL EVEN TO LET MILITARY PARTICIPATE IN TALKS.

3. BRITISH MILITARY ATTACHE TOLD DATT THAT BRITISH WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED IN TALKS AND CONSIDER PROSPECTS POOR FOR BETTER COORDINATION. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, ONLY REAL RESULT OF TALKS WAS AGREEMENT TO HOLD ADDITIONAL ONES IN FUTURE.

4. ACCORDING TO AGREED COMMUNIQUE, BRITISH AND IRISH SIDES ALSO DISCUSSED IMPLEMENTATION OF REPORT OF COMMON LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION. DEPT WILL RECALL THAT THIS COMMISSION, SET UP UNDER SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT, RECOMMENDED SYSTEM OF "EXTRATERRITORIAL" LEGAL JURISDICTION FOR PROSECUTION OF CROSS-BORDER FUGITIVES. GOI CONTACTS HAVE TOLD US GOVT INTENDS SOON TO INTRODUCE IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION IN DAIL. FIANNA FAIL PARTY WILL PROBABLY OPPOSE. FIGHT COULD BE LONG AND HARD. ("EXTRATERRITORIALITY" MEANS PROSECUTION IN ONE JURISDICTION FOR CRIMES COMMITTED IN ANOTHER.)

5. COMMENT: BORDER SECURITY IS A TOUGH ISSUE. GOI BELIEVES THAT IRA ACTIVITY IN BORDER AREAS IS LARGELY A PRODUCT OF BRITISH ARMY'S EXCESSIVE ZEAL. THERE IS SOME VALIDITY IN THIS ASSESSMENT: BRITISH POLICY OF CRATERING BORDER ROADS, FOR EXAMPLE, CERTAINLY ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE EXCEPT CREATION OF NEW PUBLIC SYMPATHY FOR PROVOS. GOI NATURALLY WISHES TO AVOID SAME PROBLEM ON ITS SIDE. ISSUE OF "COLLABORATION" WITH BRITISH FORCES IS ALSO MORE SENSITIVE TODAY THAN IN RECENT PAST, SINCE SOUTHERN OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT BRITISH TROOPS HAVE BEEN ESCAPING POLITICAL CONTROL AND CRACKING DOWN TOO HARSHLY ON NORTHERN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY. (WE CANNOT EVALUATE THIS.)

6. DESPITE THESE CONSIDERATION, APPEARS TO US THAT IRISH ARE SQUEAMISH IN THEIR REFUSAL TO COOPERATE AGAINST BORDER PROVOS. THERE MAY WELL BE EXTENSIVE USE OF REPUBLIC AS REFUGE FOR PROVO RAIDING PARTIES, AND THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE OBLIGATION ON PART OF REPUBLIC TO END THIS PRACTICE. BRITISH AND NORTHERN PROTESTANTS ARE NATURALLY SKEPTICAL OF DUBLIN'S INTENTIONS WHILE THIS SITUATION CONTINUES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, NATIONAL SECURITY, MEETINGS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, BORDER CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DUBLIN01307
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740265-0645
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740929/aaaaaxyc.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <10 MAR 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LITTLE MOVEMENT IN IRISH-BRITISH SECURITY TALKS SUMMARY: FIRST IRISH-BRITISH TALKS ON SECURITY PRODUCED NO MOVEM-
TAGS: PINT, EI, UK, IRA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005